

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 DLOS-06 SAL-01

OES-06 ACDA-07 EB-08 CG-00 DOTE-00 /110 W

-----081053Z 093297 /17

P 080933Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5327

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 1809

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, JA, KS

SUBJECT: FONOFF WORRIED BY ROK RIPOSTE ON TAKASHIMA/DOK DO

SUMMARY. REPORTED STRONG ROK REJOINDER TO PRIME MINISTER'S REITERATION OF GOJ CLAIM TO SMALL ISLANDS IN SEA OF JAPAN HAS WORRIED FONOFF, WHICH HOPES TWENTY-THREE YEAR-OLD DISPUTE CAN BE SPEEDILY RESHELVED. GOJ HAS OFFERED AGAIN TO SUBMIT QUESTION TO ICJ, AND TO DISCUSS IT WHEN ROK FONMIN PARK VISITS LATE NEXT WEEK. GOJ EVIDENTLY DID NOT WANT QUARREL WITH ROK OVER FISHING RIGHTS IN VICINITY OF DISPUTED ROCKS, BUT RATHER SOUGHT TO AVOID PREJUDICING OTHER, MORE IMPORTANT CLAIMS TO NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND SENKAKU ISLANDS. END SUMMARY.

1. LONG-SMOULDERING ROK-JAPAN DISPUTE OVER OWNERSHIP OF UNINHABITED ROCKS IN SEA OF JAPAN HAS FLARED UP (PROBABLY BRIEFLY) WITH SHARP ROK REJOINDER TO PM FUKUDA'S DESCRIPTION OF THEM, DURING DIET INTERPELLATION FEBRUARY 5 AS JAPANESE TERRITORY.

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2. ROCKS, KNOWN TO JAPANESE AS TAKESHIMA, TO KOREANS AS DOK DO, AND TO WESTERN CARTOGRAPHERS AS LIANCOURT ROCKS, HAVE BEEN CLAIMED BY BOTH COUNTRIES SINCE MEDIEVAL TIMES. AT HIGH TIDE THEY ARE ABOUT ONE-QUARTER OF A SQUARE KILOMETER IN AREA. ROCKS WERE FORMALLY ANNEXED BY JAPAN IN 1905. PRESENT DISPUTE DATES FROM

ROK PROCLAMATION OF "RHEE LINE" IN 1952 AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SMALL ROK MILITARY GARRISON THERE THE FOLLOWING YEAR. JAPANESE HAVE SENT COAST GUARD VESSELS ON REGULAR PATROL IN VICINITY EVER SINCE, AND HAVE REGISTERED "SEVERAL PROTESTS" YEARLY. IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, FONOFF OFFICIALS TOLD EMBOFF, ROKG AND GOJ HAVE TACITLY CONCLUDED THAT DISPUTE IS FOR THE PRESENT INSOLUBLE AND OUGHT NOT BE ALLOWED TO EXACERBATE RELATIONS. OWNERSHIP OF ROCKS WAS NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, ADDRESSED DURING BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON DIVISION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF.

3. PROJECTED ESTABLISHMENT OF TWELVE-MILE JAPANESE TERRITORIAL SEA PROMPTED DIET QUESTION ABOUT STATUS OF JAPANESE CLAIM TO TAKESHIMA, TO FOUR NORTHERN ISLANDS HELD BY USSR, AND TO SENKAKUS, ISLETS ON CONTINENTAL SHELF NORTHEAST OF TAIWAN CLAIMED ALSO BY ROC AND PRC. PRESS REPORTS THAT FUKUDA REPLIED THAT ALL WERE JAPAN'S "INHERENT TERRITORY" AND THAT TWELVE-MILE WATERS WOULD BE DRAWN AROUND ALL. ACCORDING TO FONOFF OFFICIAL, WIRE SERVICES CHOSE TO HIGHLIGHT THIS EXCHANGE, THUS CREATING "ACCIDENTAL" AND, HE HOPED, BRIEF IRRITANT IN RELATIONS WITH ROK.

4. ROK APPARENTLY HAD NOT, AS OF FEBRUARY 8, LODGED DIPLOMATIC PROTEST. ACCORDING TO MEDIA, ROK FONMIN SOURCE ANGRILY REJECTED GOJ CLAIM AND SAID ROK WOULD NOT EVEN DISCUSS IT. IN RESPONSE TO ROK RIPOSTE, GOJ ON FEBRUARY 7 REITERATED OFFER TO TAKE DISPUTE TO ICJ AND ALSO INDICATED READINESS TO EXPLAIN POSITION  
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TO ROK FONMIN PARK WHEN HE STOPS OVER IN TOKYO  
FEBRUARY 17.

5. COMMENT: FONOFF INTENDED THAT ANSWER GIVEN BY FUKUDA IN DIET MINIMALLY SUSTAIN CLAIM TO ROCKS; GOJ EVIDENTLY HAD NO INTENTION OF ATTEMPTING TO ENFORCE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OVER FISHING IN VICINITY. GOJ CANNOT YIELD CLAIM WITHOUT COMPROMISING, HOWEVER SLIGHTLY, ITS MORE SENSITIVE CLAIM TO NORTHERN TERRITORIES OR TO POSSIBLY OIL-RICH SENKAKU ISLANDS AREA. ROKG AND GOJ CAN PROBABLY FIND A WAY TO RESHELVE DISPUTE FOR NOW -- BUT IF EITHER OR BOTH MOVE TO 200-MILE CLAIM, E.G., ON CONCLUSION OF LOS TREATY, SOME MORE SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT MUST BE FOUND.  
SHOESMITH

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## Message Attributes

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